

IN THE CLAIMS

With this Amendment, please amend claims 1, 4-8, 14 and 20, and cancel claim 24 such that pending claims 1-23, 25 and 26 now read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A hand-truck for supporting and transporting a load placed thereon, the hand-truck comprising:

a platform; and

a unitary rigid handle connected to the platform, the handle positionable between a stowed position, a pivotable position and a locked position, wherein the handle is accessible at each position to operatively maneuver the hand-truck.

2. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 1, wherein the handle rigidly connects to a first side of the platform while in the locked position to operatively maneuver the hand-truck.

3. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 2, wherein the handle is substantially vertical while in the locked position.

4. (Currently Amended) The hand-truck of claim 5, and further comprising a channel member fixedly attached to an underside of the platform for receiving the handle, wherein the handle slidably disposes within the channel member while in the stowed position, ~~and pivotally attaches to the channel member while in the pivotal position.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The hand-truck of claim 1, and further comprising: ~~a channel member fixedly attached to an underside of the platform for receiving the handle~~ first and second spaced-apart hinge members fixedly connected to the platform, the handle slidably disposable between the hinge members; and first and second stop members attached proximate to a distal end of the handle,

whereupon positioning the handle from the stowed position to the pivotable position, the first stop member engages the first hinge member and the second stop member engages the second hinge member whereby the handle is pivotal about the first and second hinge members.

6. (Currently Amended) The hand-truck of claim 4 ~~[[5]]~~, and further comprising support members extending from the platform and positioned substantially parallel to the channel member, wherein portions of the support members and the channel member equidistantly extend from the platform.

7. (Currently Amended) The hand-truck of claim 5, whereupon positioning the handle from the pivotable position to the stowed position, the first stop member disengages from the first hinge member and the second stop member disengages from the second hinge member. ~~and further comprising:~~

~~a hinge connected to a proximal end of the channel member, the hinge including first and second hinge members; and~~

~~wherein the handle comprises:~~

~~an elongated portion slidably disposable between the first and second hinge members and within the channel member;~~

~~handlebars connected to a proximal end of the elongated portion; and~~

~~a cylindrical member protruding from a distal end of the elongated portion, the cylindrical member engageable with the first and second hinge members, whereupon extracting the handle from the channel member, the cylindrical member engages the first and second hinge members and the handle is pivotal about the hinge.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The hand-truck of claim 1 ~~[[7]]~~, and further comprising:

a locking plate connected to the platform; ~~and wherein the handle further comprises~~

a tongue member ~~positioned upon the elongated portion, wherein the tongue member extends~~ extending from and downwardly parallel to the handle,

~~elongated portion, wherein whereupon positioning~~ the handle is positionable to place the locking plate between the tongue member and the ~~elongated portion, the handle to~~ [[is]] rigidly lock ~~locked to the handle to~~ the platform.

9. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 1, and further comprising:
a downwardly extended guard member attached to a first end of the platform; and
a wheel connected to the underside of the platform proximate the guard member,
wherein the wheel engages the ground when the platform is in a substantially horizontal position, whereupon raising a second end of the platform, the second end opposing the first end, the guard member engages the ground, whereupon further raising of the second end of the platform disengages the wheel from the ground to position the hand-truck in a substantially vertical position supported by the guard member.
10. (Original) The hand-truck of claim 9, wherein the handle is accessible proximate the second side of the platform in any position.
11. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 9, wherein the wheel disposes within and rotatably connects to the guard member.
12. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 9 wherein the guard member includes a rectangular box configuration.
13. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 1 and further comprising a foot-brake connected to the platform, whereupon activating the foot-brake, the foot-brake extends to frictionally engage the ground, thereby preventing movement of the hand-truck.
14. (Currently Amended) A hand-truck comprising:
a platform;
a channel member fixedly attached to an underside of the platform;

a locking plate connected to the platform proximate to the channel member;
first and second spaced-apart [[a]] hinge members fixedly attached to ~~connected to~~
~~the platform proximate the locking plate and~~ the channel member;
a handle connectable to the platform ~~and disposable within the channel member,~~
~~the handle~~ comprising:
a unitary rigid member slidably disposable within the channel member and
between the first and the second spaced-apart members;
a tongue portion spaced-apart ~~extending~~ from and extending downwardly
parallel ~~[[to]]~~ the rigid member ~~handle~~; and
a stop positioned proximate to a distal end of the rigid member; and
whereupon extracting the handle from the channel member, the stop engages the
first and second hinge members and the handle is pivotally positionable
between a lowered positioned and a raised position, wherein the handle is
lockable to the platform by positioning the handle to dispose the locking
plate between the tongue portion ~~[[member]]~~ and the rigid member
~~[[handle]]~~.

15. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 14 and further comprising a foot-brake attached to the platform, whereupon enacting the foot-brake, the foot-brake engages the ground thereby preventing movement of the hand-truck.

16. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 14, and further comprising:
first and second guard members attached to the underside of the
platform; and
a wheel disposed within each guard member, wherein the wheels engage the
ground when the platform is in a substantially horizontal position,
whereupon raising a second end of the platform the guard engages the
ground, whereupon further raising of the second end disengages the wheels
from the ground and the hand-truck is positionable to a substantially
vertical position supported by the guard members.

17. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of the claim 14 wherein the handle further comprises handlebars that are accessible to operatively maneuver the hand-truck regardless the position of the handle.

18. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 14, and further comprising support members extending downwardly from the platform and positioned substantially parallel to the channel member, wherein portions of the support members and the channel member extend equidistantly downward from the platform.

19. (Previously Presented) The hand-truck of claim 18 wherein the support members and the channel member are positioned to receive a forklift finger between the channel member and either support member or transversal to the channel member and the support members.

20. (Currently Amended) A dual-purpose material handling system comprising:
a platform having a plurality of sides for supporting a load placed thereon;
ground engageable wheels attached to the platform;
a unitary rigid handle positionable between a substantially vertical locked position and a stowed position connected to the platform;
a channel member fixedly attached to an underside of the platform for receiving the handle; and
support members extending downward from the platform and positioned parallel to the channel member, wherein the support members and the channel member are positioned to receive a forklift between the channel member and either support member or transversal to the channel member and the support members, thereby allowing the material handling system to be transportable by the forklift from any side without the forklift contacting the handle regardless if the handle is in the locked position or the stowed position.

21. (Original) The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a locking

mechanism to lock the handle in the locked position, the locking mechanism comprising:

a locking plate; and

a tongue member, the tongue member engageable with the locking plate, whereupon engaging the tongue member with the locking plate, the handle fixedly secures to the platform and is in the locked position.

22. (Previously Presented) The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a locking mechanism to lock the handle in the locked position, the locking mechanism comprising:

a locking plate connected to the channel member extending away perpendicularly from the platform; and

a tongue member for receiving the locking plate, the tongue member extending away from and parallel to the handle, whereupon disposing the locking plate between the tongue member and the handle, the handle fixedly secures to the platform and is in the locked position.

23. (Original) The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a brake attached to an underside of the platform, the brake engageable with the ground, whereby engaging the brake the material handling system frictionally engages the ground to prevent movement of the material handling system.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Original) The material handling system of claim 20 wherein at least two of the wheels are fixed directional wheels, the material handling system further comprising a guard disposed about each fixed directional wheel and attached to the platform, whereby raising an end of the platform opposing an end containing the fixed directional wheels, the guards engage the ground, whereby further raising of the opposing end of the platform positions the material handling system in a stowed position supported by the guards.

26. (Original) The material handling system of 25 wherein the platform is in a

substantially vertical position when material handling system is in the stowed position.